

12 August, 2013

Mr. Brian Pedrotti
County Planning Dept.
976 Osos Street, Rm 300
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

Re: proposed Laetitia Housing Project

Mr. Pedrotti:

I am a relatively new resident of California as my wife and I moved to the Rancho Nipomo area from Nebraska in November 2012. A primary enticement in moving to this particular area was its beautiful natural surroundings, however, water availability, which we knew was on-going concern throughout the state of California, was the number one issue of ours as we needed some comfort in knowing the property we were interested in purchasing, that ultimately being, 530 Sycamore Creek Lane, had a sustainable water source for years to come. After researching through and visiting with several local hydrologists, we felt relatively secure in moving forward with our purchase. Unbeknown to us after moving here, we were told that Laetitia was proposing a large residential development that is directly across from our residence/property. Not only would this development totally negate the aesthetics of the natural surroundings of the Nipomo hills, it could dramatically depreciate the value of our property due to lack of water availability.

Beyond the personal issues related to the adverse affects of the proposed Laetitia residential development, I wish to include the following points, as they not only affect me personally, but likely all current residents living in and around the proposed development project area:

UNRELIABILITY OF FRACTURED SHALE – All of the water needed for the Laetitia project would be provide from wells located on the property. Well water in the Nipomo Hills comes from the fractured shale rock formations, not a sand aquifer as if found on the Nipomo Mesa. Fractured shale is noted for being a very unpredictable and unreliable source of water. Many well sin the Nipomo Hills have suddenly gone dry. Laetitia cannot adequately guarantee that is has a reliable water source, nor can it guarantee that it will not dry up the surrounding wells of its neighbors.

WELL GOING DRY – There have already been documented cases of numerous wells surrounding Laetitia that have either gone dry or had to be dug deeper due to reduced output. This is typical of wells located above fractured shale.

DRY WELLS DOWNSTREAM – Los Berros Creek is critical to charging the aquifer which supplies Oceano (within the Northern Cities Management Area) with its water. The County is responsible for the ensuring the reliability of this water source. Already, the wells close to Los Berros Creek that Falcon Ridge(El Campo area) once used are not adequate, and other sources had to be implemented.

WATER STORAGE IN SHALE – Cleath and Associates proposed to utilize water storage within the fractured shale as a component of “safe yield”. Tow of the peer reviews indicate that this is a violation of CEQA and should not be allowed. Fractured shale does not typically “store water”.

FAILURE OF SMALL WATER DISTRICTS – The Laetitia development project calls for the creation of a small water district and wastewater disposal system. These small water companies have posed many problems in the past for the County and often times require a bail-out or merger with a larger system (as with Cypress Ridge).

THE WELL SHELL GAME – Laetitia’s new DEIR claims to solve the problem of depleting the water in Los Berros Creek by not using wells number 12 and 13 for the housing project, due to their close proximity to the creek. However, these two wells would still be used for the irrigation of the vineyard, which will be increased by 27 acres according to the plan. Letitia’s water “shell game” is making a mockery of the CEQA process!

CAUTION FROM THE EXPERTS – The developer hired an dpaid CCH (Cleath Harris Consultants) to do the initial hydrogeological study for Laetitia. Because of our concerns to the initial DEIR 3 peer reviews have been performed of CCH’s work, all of which differed significantly with many of CCH’s conclusions. The hydrogeology company Geosyntec states in the October 2011 letter. “This indicates that the long term capacities of the fractured bedrock aquifers to transmit groundwater are lower than previously estimated and sustainable production potential of the Project Site wells based on the short term tests were unrealistically high. Initial yields from wells in fractured bedrock aquifers often are not representative of longer term yields, which are typically lower”.

MANY APPROVED LOTS – There are already many vacant lots in the immediate area to the south of Laetitia. These lots have already been approved for building. For example, there are about 20 unimproved lots within the Rancho Nipomo tract, 10 lots within the Fitz-Gerald Ranch, 3 lots in the Wittsrom minor ag cluster, and about 3 lots on Rim Rock Raod. All of these approved lots, when homes are built, will be obtaining their water from the same freactured shale that Laetitia is proposing for their water source. Additionally, most of these lots are approved for two home sites. There will simply not be enough water to go around for everyone as additional house are built in this area on approved lots.

In conclusion, it would seem apparent from the above listed issues that WATER is not a sustainable resource for the proposed Laetitia residential development project and if approved, would likely cause hardships for the many residents currently living in and around the proposed development. I strongly ask and recommend the San Luis Obispo County Planning Committee to reject the proposed Laetitia development project.

Respectfully,



Gary P. Vavrina